

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

RECENT ADVANCES IN PLASTIC SURGERY—Number One— Edited by James Calnan, FRCP, FRCS, Professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, University of London, Royal Postgraduate Medical School and Hammersmith Hospital, London. Longman Inc., 19 West 44th Street, New York City (10036), 1976. 210 pages, \$28.50.

The tenor of this book is set by the editor in his preface when he says that any technique or understanding of disease that benefits the patient is an advance, and that anything new in the past five years can be considered recent. Therefore, one should not expect anything startling or really new when reading the book. However, one may indeed arrive at a better understanding of some areas of plastic surgery.

The chapters on the rheumatoid hand are very worthwhile in view of an increasingly older population. The use of prosthetic joints and the extension of various tendon transplants in combination with joint reconstruction hold promise for many of these patients. Probably, the best chapter follows and is that relative to speech, particularly the nasal escape of air, written by the editor. The discussion of cleft palate repair and flap pharyngoplasty is only a postscript in an otherwise excellent presentation.

The discussion of automobile injuries holds nothing new and constitutes only a review. The same is true of the chapter devoted to a statistical survey of burn admissions.

There is a discussion of the organization of plastic surgical services in urban guerrilla warfare which is very interesting but includes nothing relative to advances in plastic surgery.

A handy pocket reference can be found in the chapter on chronically swollen legs. However, this topic is more thoroughly discussed in other books and papers. The same evaluation can be made of the material on conservative treatment of leg ulcers.

There is an excellent review on the planning and design of pedicle flaps along axial blood supply patterns. The use of free flaps is touched upon. However, these are still in the realm of laboratory research surgical procedures. Their wide use in clinical plastic surgery will depend upon the development of better and more easily used microsurgical techniques.

Finally, the last two chapters deal with cancer and its treatment by massive surgical resection and reconstruction and the use of radiation therapy. The methods and techniques discussed are those used in many medical centers in recent years.

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CONTROVERSY IN CARDIOLOGY—The Practical Clinical Approach— Edited by Edward K. Chung, MD, Professor of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University, and Director of the Heart Station, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia. Springer-Verlag New York Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York City (10010), 1976. 299 pages, with 99 figures, \$29.80.

The title of the book brings to mind the eminently successful volumes *Controversies in Medicine* edited by Ingelfinger and associates, and the popular sessions of the annual meetings of the American College of Cardiology "Controversies in Cardiology." In these, one author, or one speaker, respectively, presents a viewpoint and another an opposite viewpoint. In the above named

book, one of the editors writes a comment after the presentations facilitating the reader's perception of the controversy. One would expect this book to follow the pattern, but it does not. The editor elected to ask *one* writer to present both sides of the controversy.

The book consists of 19 chapters, each dealing with a "controversial" subject. Some of the subjects are obviously controversial but a good many are not, at least not in the ordinary sense, since one can find hardly a subject in which there would not be a difference of opinion on one point or another. In the former category one can place "Prophylactic antiarrhythmic therapy in acute myocardial infarction," "Anticoagulant therapy for coronary heart disease" or "Indications for coronary artery surgery and patient selection." Examples of the latter category are "Serum digoxin level—Practical value," "Current concepts of hemiblocks" or "Echocardiography—Its practical value."

Seven of the 19 articles are written by the editor with the aid of his fellows and associates—acting as a jack of all trades. Most of the others are written by well-known authorities on the given subject. The problem here is that most of these authors have certain prejudices or commitments to a specific viewpoint—some even have vested interests in it—which makes it hardly possible to present a balanced view of the subject.

Disregarding the objectives of the book and reading some of the articles per se one can find excellent and informative summaries of less controversial subjects. However, in the light of the stated objectives of presenting the "pro and con" viewpoints in each chapter, the book is poorly conceived and badly executed. The editor's immodest postulate that "the book will be extremely valuable to all practicing physicians with various backgrounds" is not fulfilled and the book is not recommended.

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ENDOSCOPY—Edited by George Berci, MD, Director, Department of Endoscopy, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles; Attending Surgeon, Wadsworth Veterans Administration Hospital, Los Angeles; Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine; with 58 coauthors. Appleton-Century-Crofts, A Publishing Division of Prentice-Hall, Inc., 292 Madison Avenue, New York City (10017), 1976. 805 pages, \$78.50.

This comprehensive and up-to-date reference work covers all aspects of endoscopy and should be of interest to persons in many different specialties. There are a few color plates that illustrate endoscopic findings, but certainly this book is not what one would consider a comprehensive atlas of endoscopic photographs. It is, rather, meant to be a thorough review of the technical aspects of endoscopy, and fills a definite need in this area.

The first part of the text relates to general principles of endoscopy. Such topics as optical principles; fiber-optic physics; light sources; various types of instruments, both rigid and fiberoptic; microbiology, and sterilization of endoscopes are included. In addition the technical aspects of ultrasound, laser beam surgical procedures and electrosurgery are covered in detail. Photography and television as they apply to endoscopy are also reviewed.